

Type 2 Diabetes

Diabetes is a condition in which the level of sugar (glucose) in your blood is too high. In type 2 diabetes, this often goes along with high blood pressure and high cholesterol. When these conditions are not managed, it can cause complications with heart, eyes, kidneys, and feet.

Your body uses sugar for energy—for activities like walking, playing, and working, but also for breathing and digesting—and all the other functions your body performs. Your blood always has some sugar in it; your body makes glucose, and you also get it from food. But *too much* sugar in the blood isn't good for your health.

Insulin is a hormone that helps your body control your blood sugar. When you have type 2 diabetes, your body does not make enough insulin and does not use the insulin it makes as well as it should. As a result, sugar builds up in the blood instead of going into the cells. If your blood sugar level remains high, over time, it can cause serious damage to your heart, eyes, kidneys, and feet.

Many people with type 2 diabetes also have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and are overweight. Treating these conditions, if you have them, is just as important as controlling your type 2 diabetes.

	Fasting Blood Sugar Levels mg/dl	A1C Range (%)
Normal	<100	<5.7
Pre-Diabetes	100-125	5.7-6.4
Diabetes	≥ 126	≥6.5

People with type 2 diabetes may be able to control their blood sugar levels with weight loss, a careful diet, and regular exercise. However, many people will need to take pills, injections, or insulin to manage their blood sugar levels, especially if they have had type 2 diabetes for a long time.

Type 2 diabetes is usually found in older adults. It used to be called "adult-onset diabetes." But, more and more young people are being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, often related to poor diet and being overweight. About 90% of all people with diabetes have type 2.

What increases a person's risk of type 2 diabetes?

- Being overweight
- Being inactive
- Family history of type 2 diabetes
- Having had diabetes during pregnancy (gestational diabetes)
- Certain ethnic backgrounds (people who are African-American, Asian, Portuguese, Hispanic, and Native American are at higher risk)

What are symptoms of type 2 diabetes?

Some people have no symptoms, but common ones include:

- Thirst
- Feeling tired
- Increase in urination (the amount of urine you pass and how often)
- Blurry vision
- Hunger

What can you do to treat type 2 diabetes and prevent complications?

- Lose weight (if overweight)—even a 10-pound weight loss can help keep your diabetes in control!
- Eat healthy—stop drinking juice, soda, or other sugary beverages; eat smaller meals; eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Be physically active—walking more is a great start.
- Check your blood sugar, as directed
- Take medications, if prescribed
- Control your blood pressure and your cholesterol
- If you smoke, stop

Patient Care Advice (PCOI) documents are available under **Resources** on your Patient Gateway home page.

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